DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING City and County of San Francisco

INTERIM REPORT ON A CENTRAL AIRLINES BUS TERMINAL

Interim Report to
the City Planning Commission
in Compliance with its
Request of June 28, 1950

A ugust 24, 1950

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
100 LARKIN STREET · CIVIC CENTER · SAN FRANCISCO 2, CALIFORNIA

August 24, 1950

Mr. Ernest J. Torregano, President
City Planning Commission,
San Francisco, California.

Dear Mr. Torregano:

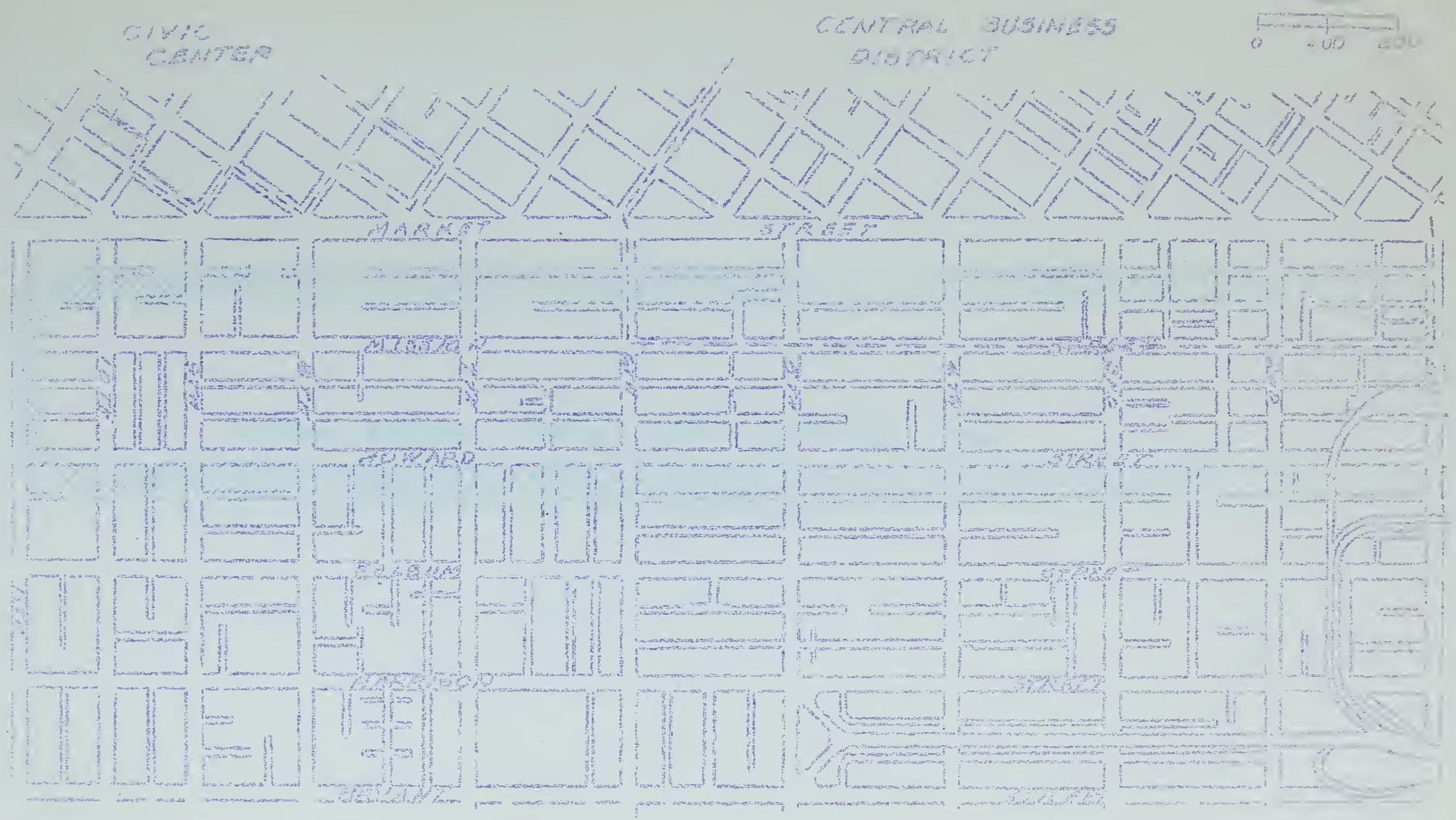
Transmitted herewith, in compliance with your request of June 28, 1950, is a report on the location of a central airline bus terminal in San Francisco.

This report may be considered as an interim staff report to the City Planning Commission prepared in connection with studies for amendments to the Transportation Section of the Master Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Oppermann

Paul Oppermann
Director of Planning



RECOMMENDED AIRLINE BUS TERMINAL AREA

AUGUST 25, 1955

PLATE

SAN FRANCISCO COORDINATED [illegible]

[illegible] REPORT ON A CENTRAL AIRLINE'S SUBSTANTIAL [illegible]

The primary competitive advantage of air transport over other means of transport is the saving of time which it provides. Air trips between metropolitan centers, however, require the terminal portions of the trip to be made on the ground, and it is in this phase of such trips that disproportionate time differentials seriously reduce the total time-saving commodity which air transport has to offer.

"Suppose you were flying from San Francisco to Los Angeles ..." states a bulletin published by the Airport Division of the American Road Builders' Association in March 1949. "While the flying-time between those California cities would be only 120 minutes in a DC-6 airplane, you would, nevertheless, spend 75 minutes traversing the 26 miles of highways which connect these cities' principal airports with their downtown business centers during peak travel conditions.

"While it takes only 120 minutes to cover the 345 miles which separate the airports of California's largest centers of population, more than 60 per cent as much time is required to travel less than eight per cent as far on the highway phase of the trip."

Although it now takes from 35 minutes to one hour to reach the San Francisco Airport from downtown San Francisco by airport limousine, a great reduction in the total travel time will be possible when the Bayshore Freeway is fully completed between Fourth Street and the Airport. Completion of the Bayshore Freeway is scheduled for 1955. The twelve mile distance to the Airport then can be traversed in approximately 20 minutes on the Freeway. This

[illegible] in [illegible].

Location of the airport terminal, however, will not [illegible] the condition of time-consuming competition on the [illegible] over which airport buses must pass between the [illegible] downtown terminals, nor will it alleviate the condition of [illegible] which characterizes present downtown terminal operations in the [illegible] with this problem that this report is concerned.

Present Downtown Terminal Accommodations

At present, all airport bus passenger traffic originates at the respective airline ticket offices located around Union Square in downtown San Francisco. In this concentrated area are the offices of United Airlines, Trans World Airlines, Pan American World Airways, Western Airlines, Philippine Airlines and American Airlines.

The common passenger carrier for these companies is the Airport Limousine Service provided by the Gray Line, Inc., and its subsidiary, Mailor's Limousines, Inc., which operates a bus and limousine service to the San Francisco Airport. A year-round average of between 1,000 and 1,100 passengers is accommodated daily with a fleet of 20 buses. Higher volumes occur during peak periods of travel.

To reach Union Square, the airport buses cross Market Street at Eighth Street, and run up Hyde Street to Geary Street and thence run east on Geary Street to Union Square. The return trip is made via Post Street to Hyde Street. Occasionally, the return trip is made via Third Street rather than via Eighth Street and Potrero Avenue. The comparative time on either route is about the same.

Terminal accommodations at the respective ticket offices are inadequate for air passengers, and are disruptive to other traffic in the area. All loading is done at the curb, and during

peak traffic period. Buses seriously interfere with the opera-tion of local transit vehicles while parking and loading. Sidewalks are used as loading platforms and baggage must be sorted and stacked on the pedestrian ways. Such accommodations are inadequate, most space being unavailable, so that further conflict with other traffic is caused by the passenger movements. Passengers arriving at hours when the ticket offices are closed are deposited on the sidewalk in front of the St. Francis Hotel. Baggage handling and checking accommodations are inadequate.

Need for Central Terminal

The need for and desirability of a single downtown terminal for air passengers has long been recognized by all parties concerned: the airlines, the bus operators and the City, as well as the passengers whose convenience and comfort are involved.

In 1949 the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce acting on behalf of the airlines serving San Francisco requested the City Planning Commission to make a study and report upon sites for a central bus terminal in or near the downtown district. It was apparently the desire of the airlines to sponsor jointly and with private funds the development of such a terminal if a suitable location could be found.

A report was made under the title Studies for a Central Airline Bus Terminal, and the general conclusions and recommendations contained therein with minor modification are still valid. Among the conclusions of that study were the following:

1. The present system of handling airline bus passengers at the curb in front of each airline ticket office is unsatis-

because [illegible] the [illegible] kind of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] public and the community.

d. It would be unwise to build a permanent airline [illegible] terminal until more complete or final plans are made for the inbound distribution of traffic from the Bayshore Freeway, and [illegible] clear are made on various related streets, bridge and transit projects now under consideration.

The study recommended that a temporary central airline [illegible] terminal be developed to serve for approximately ten years, and [illegible] be located in the area adjacent to the southern boundary of the Central Business District, not more than one and one-half blocks from Market Street and not more than three and one-half blocks east or four blocks west of Seventh Street, then planned as the terminus of the Bayshore Freeway. The study further recommended that a Permanent Terminal be planned and built as soon as a final solution of the Bridge and Freeway distribution problem has been worked out.

Criteria for Air Terminal Location

A well located airport terminal should have direct means of access to the Bayshore Freeway - and to a major thoroughfare during the interim period before completion of the Bayshore Freeway - leading from the downtown district to the Airport.

A location on the south side of Market Street will best meet this desirable criteria. The proposed Trafficways Plan, currently under consideration, has as a major objective the freeing of downtown surface streets of through traffic movements and of cross-Market traffic movements which delay the movement of traffic on Market Street. This could be accomplished by the Inner Freeway,

ring -- consisting of the Central Freeway, Doolwey, the Embarcadero and the Bayshore Freeway -- which encircles the downtown district. All traffic would leave this freeway ring at the point where a minimum distance would have to be traversed on surface streets to reach downtown destinations. Hence a terminal location south of Market would be within a maximum of five to six blocks of the Bayshore Freeway and would require a minimum of travel on the surface streets.

At the time of the 1946 airport terminal study, plans for the Bayshore Freeway terminated the Freeway at Seventh Street. Present plans for the Freeway provide for an extension with on an off ramps at Fourth Street. With this modification, the area south of Market which would be conveniently serviced by the Bayshore Freeway is expanded to extend three and a half blocks east of Fourth Street and four blocks west of Seventh Street, within two and a half blocks of Market Street. It is recommended, therefore, that a central airline terminal be located in this area, as shown on Plate 1.

Further criteria for a desirable terminal site include (1) accessibility by taxis and private automobiles and (2) convenience to other terminals and to local transit lines.

A terminal location just south of Market Street as recommended would be readily accessible to Market and Mission transit lines and to crosstown transit routes. Automobile and taxi circulation could be well handled, particularly since there are numerous alleys which could be utilized in developing a circulation system for a terminal.

A further advantage of a site in the recommended area is that any site in the area would be approximately one-half mile closer to the Bayshore Freeway by direct route than Union Square will be by the Geary-Hyde route. Thus, surface traffic congestion will be minimized for airport buses. This saving in distance is also advantageous as a time-saving factor even under present conditions prior to completion of the Bayshore Freeway. It is significant in this regard that the three intercity bus terminals serving San Francisco are located within the area recommended for a central airline bus terminal. One of these three terminals recently moved to its present site from a site on the north side of Market Street, due to the greater convenience, time-saving and accessibility afforded.

No attempt has been made in this report to choose a particular site within the area recommended. When efforts are furthered toward selecting a site the Department will stand ready to give whatever aid and service it can in assuring that the site plan be fully integrated with other features of the Master Plan.